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Contact: Robin Winchell (202) 225-4031

WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon announced today that Louisiana ports servicing the offshore oil and gas industry are one step closer to becoming eligible for Department of Homeland Security port security grants. Melancon, who was chosen by the leadership of the House Science Committee to serve on the conference committee for the SAFE Port Act (HR 4954), said the conference report signed today includes language expanding the eligible criteria for DHS's Port Security Grant Program to include "energy" ports. Previously, only ports determined by DHS to have certain commercial, economic, or strategic value were eligible to apply. The conference report could be voted on by the full House as early as this evening and is expected to pass both houses of Congress and be signed into law by the President.

"Protecting our ports from terrorism is vital to our nation's economic security, and I am proud to support this legislation recognizing the significance of ports supporting America's Energy Coast," said Melancon. **"Louisiana's ports not only play a key role in transporting millions of barrels of crude oil a day into the United States, they also service the offshore oil rigs supplying more than 75% of the Gulf's deepwater oil production. □ America's energy and economic security are dependent on Louisiana's port security and I am happy Congress is taking action to protect both."**

Science Committee Ranking Member Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN) offered his thanks, "Charlie has been a tireless advocate for South Louisiana, especially when it comes to ensuring the safety and security of its ports and their commerce. Last night he represented the Committee in negotiations on this important bill, and I trust the legislation was made better by his participation."

With the passage of the Security and Accountability for Every Port Act, ports such as Port Fourchon will now be eligible to apply for Port Security Grants from DHS. Upon hearing that the conference report for the bill included this language, Port Fourchon Director Ted Falgout said, "Our congressional delegation has worked very hard to make those changes, and this legislation is the result of that effort. Now, energy ports such as Port Fourchon will be eligible to compete for the millions in federal port security funding available. Energy is a critical part of this nation's security and that omission needed to be corrected."

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